[illegible] still women who are not engaged are supposed to be, in one way or other, disgraced, either by elders or by the passage of people their own age. Similar attitudes and behavior have been reported from the Jordanian town of Ramallah which is comparable to Mount in a number of important respects, although it is far larger (Granqvist, 1935, p. 45f).

It was quite clear that there is no formal mechanism for parental arrangement of marriage. One older person said, "It only matters that they love each other." Parents obviously are not disinterested in the matter, however, and their violent disapproval would certainly provoke a family crisis, but it is doubtful that it could prevent the couple from being married if they really were determined. Nevertheless, it is expected that the man will formally request the girl's father's approval before the matter proceeds. The traditional culture provides an escape for couples who face severe family disapproval. This is equivalent to elopement, and it occurs particularly at the present time. Generally, the prospective groom, with the help of friends, secretly removes the girl from the village. He then returns to the village to arrange negotiations, through an intermediary, with her father. All attempts are made to gain his approval, but if they fail, the wedding is likely to go ahead anyway. The ceremony cannot be performed in the church, or, of course, in the bride's house, but it may take place at the groom's home, and this is entirely in accord with the ordinary practice which is undertaken by the entire "The women may not come into the man's house until after they are married." The full wedding ceremony symbolizes this concept quite vividly. Marriages by elopement are nothing new, and they are perfectly legal, but doubtless they involve disadvantages: the stress of bad feelings in the family, absence of the fun of the full ceremony, and, probably, lower prestige.

The bride price (mahr or mahr) is still negotiated for among Muslims. It was often done by males in Mount, and the informants, who knew what it was, said that they did not have it now and thought that they had never had it in the village. Chabrol (1913-14, p. 317) and Sell (1913-15, p. 137) report the bride price among Moslem populations, but this does not necessarily weaken the probability of the validity of the historical connection of the Mountites. On the other hand, Van Zwoyer (1973, p. 456) says that the bride price was given up only recently in predominantly Greek Orthodox Ramallah. As far as could be ascertained, the couple receives presents—emphasizing household equipment—in equal amounts from both families and from friends.

So far, it would appear that matches are made by the mutual free choice of the parties concerned, and that this is not a new practice. We would be in serious error, however, if we confirmed such an impression without qualification. Choice is free, but within the restricted compass of village membership. Exogamous marriages do occur, but they involve duties, difficulties, and lasting consequences which cannot be taken lightly. (This will be discussed further in the chapter, "Courtship Practices and Marriage Patterns.")

On the average, the marrying couple of the present day are both members of the village, the man is several years older than the girl, and has been supporting himself for some time. They are married in the church and then proceed to the groom's house for a long and riotous party, if they conform to traditional practices. Lately, however, the party immediately after the ceremony has in many cases given way to the couple's departure on a honeymoon, though a party may be held after they return. If the marriage involves a girl from one of the other villages in el-Qurnā, the ceremony is performed in her parents' house, and the party, if any, is held at the groom's house. Among other things, this symbolizes the adoption of the girl into her husband's village and family.

A Wedding. The following account of a wedding and the party following it is a description of the one wedding and wedding party which took place while the writer was present in the village. This wedding was different from most because the bride (*al-'arūs*) was from one of the other villages in el-Qurnā. The ceremony, therefore, took place in her father's house to which the party of the groom (*al-'arīs*) traveled in a short procession of automobiles. Many acts in the series of events were later checked for their generality of practice, and the description omits various items of behavior which appeared clearly to be of a purely individual nature. There was also a peculiar mixture of old and new—an old ceremony and old customs, yet the automobiles and the clothes were all evidence of the cultural change that had occurred.

As the Mansūr party got out of their cars and gathered themselves together, members of the bride's party, who had been on the terrace of her house, moved down and stopped at a point on the narrow path halfway between the house and the road. The darbukkeh (drum) was being beaten inside the house, and there were many high-pitched cries and shouts.

The visitors moved down to the bridal group and stopped. Owing to the narrowness of the path, neither group was in a cluster. An older man in shroud and turban seemed to be leading the way with a long stick. One younger man was firing blanks from a pistol. Young men on both sides sent up the cry, heard constantly from then on, *Ṭ-ṭ-ṭ-ṭ al-'arīs minnā* ("Cheers for the wedding group")! —and the same for la-Ḥaddāds. There were many informal shouts and calls between various persons—evidently all welcoming phrases.

The groom's party stood still for perhaps five minutes, and then moved ahead between members of the bride's party who shook hands with everyone—elder an elder, relatedi, unrelated villagers. All the members of the greeting party were men except for a couple of old women. All the younger women remained in the house. "The groom's group may not enter the house until it has been bid welcome," explained one afterwards.

There was a large living-sitting room inside. The bride, not yet in wedding dress, was standing in the center of the *maq'ad* surrounded by girls her own age—sisters, cousins, and friends. Her head was lowered and she was crying. Some

[5.8] Members of the groom's party sat down in chairs on the right wing of the *majlis*. The rest of the *majlis* was occupied mostly by women and children from the bride's village. The bride was soon hustled off behind the cabinets, and she did not reappear for about half an hour, at which time the ceremony began.

[5.9] While some shifting occurred, the central section of the *majlis* was occupied by, among others, the best man (*shāhid*), the groom, the *Mudīr* priest, and the elderly priest of the other village, who is now largely inactive except for special occasions.

The waiting people seemed to divide themselves into three groups. One was gathered around the bride, the second at the *majlis*, the third (other females) moved in and out from the porch and stood around talking in the part of the house near the entrance. Occasional shots and fire-crackers were heard from outside.

[5.10] The *dabdaba* was passed around from hand to hand several times, and perhaps the women did solo dances in the center of the *majlis*. A handkerchief in each hand, the women either held them aloft, twirling them, or waved them together as the dances. In most cases, there was little body motion, and the step simply carried the women around in slow circles, but in one case—a woman who had to be persuaded to dance—some movement of the pelvis was apparent. Usually, the faces of the performers were rather expressionless, and the women, mostly young, but one or two middle-aged, seemed to be dancing merely as an expected part of the proceedings.

[5.11] While this was going on, there were repeated cries, especially by older women, to the group in general, of *ii-yay al'arūs wal'arus*, followed by a shrill and very rapid "*la-la-la-la-la*," with hand held to mouth. A third type of cry arose repeatedly from groups of men. They would sing some praise of the bride and groom and end it with a long-held high note, hands raised high, one finger pointing upwards. This was done at the greeting outside the house.

The solo dances did not follow immediately upon one another, and the intervals were marked by little or no activity in the *majlis*, people either sitting quietly or talking with each other, some changing places, others coming in. One reason in general of social gatherings is sitting rather quietly in a state—an premise, apparently, to bolster if one does not feel like it. Small glasses of tea and wine, with small candies and sugared almonds, were passed around at one point.

[5.12] Finally, a round wooden table was placed in the center of the *majlis*, and a white cloth was put over it. The two priests stood at one side together, with a lay assistant (a nephew of the bride although her contemporary in age). The bride, dressed in white with veil, was escorted to the table, her arm held by her *shāhid* (maid of honor). Her eyes were downcast, her arms folded across her stomach, and she stood in this pose throughout the entire ceremony. The groom stood beside her, and the *shāhid* was to her right—bride and groom flanked by *shāhid* and

?: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME: Lebanon ME:

children. The people present clearly in an all sides, but many stayed on the periphery, and at every moment throughout the ceremony there was talk among them.

Before the proceedings had gone far, the children took some packages of small candies out of his pocket and the candies were distributed among some of people present—mostly children and a few women. The children and the children (wife of bride's brother, and also a second cousin of the groom) each held one. After the ceremony, these were all thrown out informally. They were simply held during the ceremony.

In the ceremony itself all the principals acted throughout. The children, bride and groom took little active part, and there were few responses. The ceremony opened with both priests chanting—one chanting (reading from the Missal), the other responding with "amen." The key statement chanted alone at one point—no other activity taking place then, the priests simply standing by. The two rings lying on the table were blessed, and then the priest made the sign of the cross with each of them in turn on the foreheads and chests of bride and groom. He then put the groom's ring on the bride's finger and the bride's ring on the groom's finger and then exchanged them.

At this point, someone in the crowd handed the children two small white wreaths, made on wire. He put them on the table. They were blessed, and the priest made the sign of the cross again with them as he had done with the rings. Holding each over the heads of the principals, he called them by name as servants of God and repeated this over and over as he several times first held one wreath over one head, the other over the other, and then exchanged them, simply by crossing his own wrists. The wreaths were then set on the bride's and groom's heads. The two principals, children and children, the key statement, and the two priests then joined hands and marched around the table seven times, returning to their original places. The crowd babble in the crowd increased considerably as this went on. There was more chanting to follow, and finally the priest gave each three sips of wine from an ordinary glass tumbler.

The end came with no particular announcement—everyone knew the bride was to a man. There were renewed hand's and kiss's and the high-pressure cheers of the men. Everyone pressed forward to say individual farewells to bride and groom. The bride began to cry so earnestly that she seemed to have to lean for support on her brother and children. Others clustered around, and some of the women were also crying openly. There was nothing that would be recognized as comfort per se. One did express some recognizable signs of being either surprised or upset at these outbursts. Someone said, "Well, she is not because she is going away to another village—Look, her relatives are crying, too." Aside from this, there was a great deal of kissing and embracing—kissing on both cheeks alternately and repeatedly, particularly among the men. People began drifting toward the door

after about ten minutes, and about ten minutes more elapsed until the bride, still in bridal dress, and her party got into their car. They led the procession to Mzaqlē.

In Mzaqlē there was a large group observing the proceedings outside the groom's father's house. Upon arrival, the bride, standing on a chair in the door, chopped a piece of raw dough on the lintel above the door, molded it into a round bun shape, and made a cross on it with the heel of her hand. While still standing on the chair, she was provided with oranges which she threw at the people standing around. Then she walked inside. Two automobiles filled with relatives came with her from her village, and they included sponsors of siblings who were strange to both villagers. The bride, the groom, and his father stood in the *mqā'ad* to receive congratulations.

Again, with the principals in the center, people sat themselves down in the *mqā'ad*. Arag and wine were offered around. A large crowd of children gathered at each door to watch—staring silently.

[E25] The same dance performance as at the ceremony was carried out. However, the soloists included young men as well as women this time. After some solos, five persons, mostly of middle age, linked arms and danced a set of the *dabkē*, the principal folk dance of Lebanon, and during the evening it was done several times more.

The bride disappeared for a long period, during which two large tables were brought in and placed parallel to each other in the upper and lower parts of the *mqā'ad*. They were set with plates and glasses and bottles of 'arag. Fakhouri, cold dishes, beans and bread were served.

When the bride reappeared, after changing into an ordinary dress, she took her place at the main table. The groom's sisters were active all the time bringing in food and collecting dishes. A large number of persons sat, neither eating nor taking active part—just watching. These included the children. At one point, a woman holding over the children opened the front of her dress and began nursing a small baby. Later, another woman did the same with one of her small ones, sitting in the same place.

[E13]

[E25] The activity at the head table was enlivened by songs in praise of the bridal couple sung either by men standing behind the chairs or by others sitting down. At the end of each, some would be raised and the high musical note, mentioned before, sung in unison. One man after another seemed to pick up the solo part rather smoothly after the previous phrase was finished. Some were well-known and non-sentimental. In others, there would be laughter or ends, as if the singer had made up a clever verse impromptu, or said something with an apt and original turn of phrase. These songs of praise (*mdīḥ*) were usually phrased in terms such as those which likened the bridal couple to the stars or the light of the sun. Many seemed to be known by heart by everyone, just as everyone seemed to know the dance steps.

The bride no longer wept, and for a long time, she sat next to her father-in-law, who sat in a central, commanding position with him.

The table in the upper part of the *mafraj* was moved away first, and dancing continued as before in the space provided. In moments when there was no dancing, solo songs were sung by one or another sitting around the circle. A complete silence fell over the crowd while the *shāʿir* sang many verses in sonorous Classical Arabic of the tragic epic of Qays and Layla, whose plot, though set among Bedouin of the Umayyad period, bears striking resemblance to that of the story of Romeo and Juliet. During the recitation, familiar to all, the peoples' faces seemed thoughtful and reflective, and there was applause when the song was finished. Usually there was no applause after the dances during which everyone was clapping in time anyway.

The couple subsequently took up residence in the groom's own house. Neolocal residence is not uncommon at the present time, and it appears to be preferred by most young couples.

This account requires comment at a number of points.

1. In contrast to funerals, weddings are attended only by those who are invited. In this case the number of those invited by the groom was said to be limited because it was his second marriage, and because two large families happened to be in mourning, hence it was not fitting for their members to attend. Weddings are forbidden outright during the major part of Lent. There is a general sense of the incompatibility of happy and sad events or periods, and these rules and practices have the purpose of avoiding conflicts in emotions.

2. Peglau (1937, pp. 206-07) writes in some detail of what he calls a mock battle, of a verbal sort, which takes place in Moravian mountain villages when the groom's party approaches the bride's house. The incident reported above might not deserve to be called a verbal "mock battle" at all, but there was a definite sense of the groom's party being stopped for a time before it was allowed to approach and enter the house.

3. Writing of marriage practices in a Palestinian Muslim village, Granqvist (1950, p. 40) says that since they are losing a daughter, the bride's family do not rejoice at the wedding, and the bride herself is supposed to behave in a sad and subdued manner during the ceremony and must weep before leaving her father's house (*ibid.* p. 47). The same concept appears to be held by Lebanese Christians, and the behavior of the bride was undoubtedly largely conventional. The conventional aspect of this matter would explain the general lack of concern for the bride's tears. In this connection it should be mentioned that, like the European Mediterranean peoples, the Lebanese are on record as suppressing the expression of strong emotions in public. In fact, they interpret the unrepressiveness of North Europeans and their American cousins as evidence of other inadequacies or "deficiencies." By the same token, women in labor are free to scream loudly even when they are not actually suffering acute pain.

4. In the Middle East generally, the chief traditional role women's dance is some variation of what is commonly known as the "belly dance," the basic move-

[illegible]

ment of which consists of calling the guests. When performed by a professional dancer, it has indubitable sexual significance for the audience, although it is important to emphasize that the dancer's skill, grace, and general beauty are appreciated and valued per se and that her performance never descends to the vulgar level of the contemporary American "exotic" dancer's "bumps" and "grinds."

The women's solo dances at this wedding were not professional performances, and they cannot be described as being pelvic dances at all. The important point, however, is that these dances are performed in the village only at weddings. Granqvist (1935, p. 33) reports the same practice in a Palestinian Muslim village, although she does not describe the dances themselves. It is therefore possible that this culture element is standard in the general area. If these dances are merely decorative, why are they not performed at other festive occasions besides weddings? There is no immediate answer to this question, and at the very least room for the assumption that they have some special significance for weddings. Taking all the facts into consideration, it appears possible that dances of the type observed were originally pelvic dances which have been conventionalized almost entirely out of recognition by the demands of Christian propriety. Indeed, according to Mr. Abu Shakra (who received an eye-witness report), considerably pelvic dances are still performed unconventionally at weddings in at least one Palestinian Muslim village. Carl Seiby (1951, p. 30) writes that although pelvic dances on some occasions may have merely the purpose of sexual stimulation, they can also have a symbolic meaning connected with the interest in fertility. It is well known that fertility symbolism is regularly found in the wedding ceremonies of many cultures, and there could hardly be a more appropriate occasion than a wedding for fertility symbolization. (Conversely much enforcement), especially in a culture where large numbers of children are explicitly valued. Furthermore it is known (see, for example, Evans, 1955) that in Semitic paganism fertility dances and sexual symbolism were very important. There were, in fact, among the "Canaanite abominations" so censured by the leaders of the ancient Hebrews.

We are, therefore, tempted to reach the admittedly tentative conclusion that the women's solo wedding dances are vestiges of very ancient fertility dances, sanctioned by an on-going concern with the matter of fertility itself. Probably most of the dancers is conscious of the symbolization, but neither are the dancers of one at Western weddings. Readers may certainly be warned if they are skeptical of the validity of this reasoning, and any better explanation of the various observed phenomena is very welcome.

3. The bride's pushing of a lump of raw dough (*mahlib*) on the head of her husband's house is evidently a widespread practice. Granqvist reports on it from her Palestinian village, saying that it is supposed to be handed to the bride by her mother-in-law. She adds, "Although the women did not say so, it seemed as if they had a vague idea of some similarity between the raw dough which rises and swells as it ferments and women who become pregnant and increase the

family by giving birth to children" (1955, p. 100). This impression, if valid, may be instructively contrasted with the opinion of a young married woman of Mesnil who, although she put the mobility over the door and performed other traditional acts at her wedding, said that she thought such customs were ridiculous. She had conformed only on the insistence of others, apparently, and she seemed frankly contemptuous of those who took such things seriously.

4. The vigil, almost sepulchral, attention which was paid to the recitation of the Classical Arabic poem was significant behavior—not so much in regard to the wedding itself, but to the values which are attached to Classical Arabic, a matter which is discussed elsewhere in this work.

FUNERALS

Current evidence indicates that in Mesnil the younger generation is more willing to practice innovations than the elder, and less prone to cling to the old. And it is true in Mesnil as it is elsewhere that the wedding is a rite which evokes, largely in the younger people, hopeful thoughts about the future. On the other hand, the funeral evokes, mainly in elder people, wistful thoughts of the past. If these matters are founded in fact, they would help to explain why it is that substantial and formal changes are quite evident in the rite of marriage, and why the funeral, dominated ordinarily by elder people, appears to maintain its old forms and significance. Furthermore, to a greater degree than the wedding, the Lebanese village funeral always has been, and still is, more than a rite of passage. It is also a rite of consolidation which serves as a force for the solidarity of the entire village, and, to some extent, the district. It is of great significance that the vigor of this social function of the funeral appears to persist undiminished among the younger people as well as the elder.

One funeral service was attended during the period of study. It took place in the afternoon, somewhat more than twenty-four hours after the death had occurred. The deceased was an elderly widow who had very few close relatives. For these reasons, someone said, "There will not be many people there."

The body was immediately taken care of by neighboring women. They laid it out in the family house and kept vigil over it until the time of the service. During the evening before the service, a large number of women paid their respects at the house, and at least twenty men of a town gathered solemnly in a neighboring house owned by a cousin of the deceased's late husband. They ate in a large circle in the courtyard, conversing very quietly.

On the day of the funeral, the guests rose in attendance at the house, making arrangements during the morning. At about two thirty the men, solemnly dressed fifty or more, gathered at one house while the women were with the body. At about three the men were outside and gathered in groups outside the house of the deceased. There was considerable shaking of hands with men from other Druze villages. Within the deceased's house there was some wailing.

The term "incest" is most meaningful when it is restricted to the description of the mating and/or marriage of relatives so close that knowledge of the act evokes horror and revulsion among the other members of the community to such a degree that the guilty pair may be disgraced, ostracized or even killed. On this definition, the marriage of first cousins in Murngil is not incest. This is indicated by the status of the two pairs of first cousins known now living in the village. As far as could be observed, they suffer in no way because of their special relationship, and even have solid referents. The fact was alleged not for example as being criminal, against the Kunapipi rules, and therefore requiring an episodic disposition, but this was all.

Nevertheless, the marriage of first cousins is restricted, and though not absolutely impossible, difficulties are put in the way of its achievement, and it is rare. In terms of this restriction all first cousins are of equal and undifferentiated status. It is the guess of this writer that (1) the ratings of all first cousins being equally close relatives in terms of affective relationships, and (2) the cessation of the kinship taboo pair to the male spouses of all first cousins are developments from the pseudo-sibling status of all first cousins which the Church marriage rules established. These three elements of behavior are not in accord with what we would expect to find in a strictly patrilineal system. However, in regard to inheritance and other rights and privileges associated with lineage membership, patrilateral parallel cousins alone have special status, and none of the other types of first cousin count at all. It is important to note that the importance of matrilateral ties is limited to first cousins and their parents, especially the mother's brothers.

Such is the "compromise" between Church regulations and kinship rules as reflected in the various types of behavior associated with first cousins. The theory is admittedly speculative, but in the absence of a better alternative, it is the only interpretation which this writer can give the variously inconsistent phenomena which have been discussed.

RULES OF INHERITANCE

The rules of inheritance are relevant to the subject of kinship and marriage. Particularly, inheritance among the Arabs goes from father to children. According to Koranic and Ottoman law, all sons receive equal shares, and all daughters receive equal shares, but a daughter's share is equal to half a son's. As the villagers say: "One son is worth two daughters."

In Murngil, however, daughters commonly do not take their shares, but, instead, make them over to their brothers. Zboray (1951, p. 407) reports exactly the same practice in contemporary Kandahil. Several informants of both sexes said that this was not an unfair arrangement because most brothers give their sisters substantial presents when they are married. Some daughters do sell, to actual practice, ordinarily inherit property, their marriage or non-marriage of other kin groups does not contribute to any diversion of land, property.